

WHAT EMPLOYEES NEED TO KNOW



What is Harassment?

EEO law defines harassment as personal slurs or other denigrating or insulting verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's: *race, age, color, religion, disability, retaliation, genetic information, national origin parental status*, or sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and transgender status).*

Harassment creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment; unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities that either results in a tangible employment action, or is so severe or pervasive as to constitute an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Harassing behavior can include, but is not limited to:

- 1) verbal conduct that could include racial or sexual epithets, foul language, unwanted sexual flirtations, ethnic jokes, derogatory statements or slurs;
- 2) physical conduct that could include improper touching or assault; or
- 3) visual harassment that could include racially or sexually explicit or derogatory posters, cartoon or drawings, or obscene gestures. ***NOTE:** *Although EEOC does not have jurisdiction, VA prohibits discrimination based on parental status.*

Employee Responsibility

Employees must assume an active role in the prevention of harassment (sexual and non-sexual). It is important for all employees to become familiar with the organization's harassment prevention policy. Be aware of your conduct and the conduct of others to ensure that all behavior corresponds with the expectations and behavioral requirements of the policy. Be aware of subtle forms of harassment; and, be sensitive to individuals who may be offended by verbal and non-verbal behavior from others. Employees can assist management's efforts to eradicate workplace harassment by reporting harassment occurring against self or others, and encouraging staff to report any behaviors that are negatively impacting the workplace.

The Consequences of Harassment

Management should make clear that it will undertake immediate and appropriate corrective action, including disciplinary action, whenever it determines that harassment has occurred in violation of VA's Harassment Prevention Policy. Management should inform both parties about the measures undertaken. Remedial measures should be designed to stop the harassment; correct its effects on the employee; and ensure that the harassment cease. Remedial measures need not be those that the employee requests or prefers as long as they are effective. However, remedial measures should not adversely affect the employee alleging harassment. Those measures should correct the effects of the harassment.

Employee Rights and Responsibilities

It is the employee's responsibility to report any and all harassment. The employee may directly say to the harasser that she or he wants the misconduct to stop and then wait to see if that is effective in ending the harassment before complaining to management or contacting the Resolution Support Center (RSC). If the harassment persists, report the unwanted behavior immediately. The employee may elect to have a representative assist them in this process. **Note: The Harassment Prevention Program (HPP) procedures do not affect rights under the EEO complaints process. The harassment prevention reporting process is entirely separate from the EEO complaints process. This means that an employee who reports allegations of harassment in accordance with VA's Harassment Prevention Policy has not filed an EEO complaint. An employee who wishes to file a discrimination complaint should contact ORM at (888) 737-3361 within 45 days of the alleged harassing conduct. An employee may also report harassment using the HPP procedures and file an EEO complaint simultaneously.**

Retaliation

Management should make clear that it will not tolerate retaliation against employees who report harassment or provide information related to such complaints. To assure employees there is no need to fear retaliation management must clearly communicate and enforce a policy that no employee will be retaliated against for complaining of harassment.

Reporting Procedures

There are two paths for reporting harassing conduct:

- 1) Contact your internal departmental resources. Your first line supervisor, if applicable or the next level in your supervisory chain if the harassment involves your direct supervisor. You can also contact the Harassment Prevention Coordinator (HPC) POC for your office. OR
- 2) Contact the HPP at (888) 566-3982. This team of Specialists is equipped to discuss your concerns with you, enter your harassment report in to the HPP database, as well as answer any questions you may have.

Upon receipt of harassment allegation, the HPC will work with the appropriate management official to ensure a prompt and thorough inquiry of the alleged harassment is conducted. All inquiries and corrective measures will be completed and administered under the oversight of the Harassment Prevention Program

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**For more information contact your local
Harassment Prevention Coordinator:**

Administrations:

1. **Office of Information & Technology (OIT)**
 - Laurie Young – EEO Manager
2. **Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**
 - David Groves – Program Specialist ; Sarah Hosey-Green
3. **Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)**
 - Lois Scoon – EEO Manager
4. **National Cemetery Administration (NCA)**
 - Nicole Maldon – EEO Specialist

Staff Offices: Compliant:

5. **Office of the Secretary (OS) / Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA & OSDBU)**
 - Terry Mintz – Director of Administrative Operations
 - Renaee Allen – HR Liaison
6. **Office of General Counsel (OGC)**
 - Keesha Monk – Human Resources Division Director
7. **Office of Acquisitions, Logistics & Construction (OALC)**
TO INCLUDE: Office of Construction & Facilities Management (CFM)
 - Michael M. Brown – Executive Assistant
8. **Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA)**
 - Vivienne Alonso – Executive Assistant (OMPA)
 - LaDonna Johnson – Program Specialist
9. **Office of Public & Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA)**
 - Inez Sidbury – Director, Resource Management Staff
10. **Office of Management (OM)**
 - Michelle Collins-Wesley – Staff Assistant
 - Charnae Richardson – Correspondence Analyst
11. **Office of Human Resources & Administration (HR&A)**
 - Leah Conley – Program Specialist
12. **Office of Operations, Security and Preparedness (OSP)**
 - Sylvia Dunn – Director, Resource Manager
 - Prince Taylor – Human Resource Manager
13. **Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI)**
 - Troy Williams – Human Capital Manager
14. **Office of Congressional & Legislative Affairs (OCLA)**
 - Regina Mack-Abney – Administrative Officer
 - Kevin Stephens – Administrative Officer

Sub Offices:

15. **Office of Acquisitions & Logistics (OAL)**
 - Victoria Jones-Khalil – Program Specialist
16. **Office of Acquisitions Operations (OAO)**
 - LaKeeta Campbell – Management Analyst
17. **Office of Administration (OA)**
 - Katherine Henson – HR Liaison
18. **Office of Labor Management Relations (LMR)**
 - Larry Bennett– Staff Director
19. **Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)**
 - Tynnetta Lee – Equal Employment Specialist
 - Angela Dunn – Special Assistant
20. **Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)**
 - Letricia Jackson - ER/LR Specialist
21. **Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO)**
 - Conrad Washington – Special Assistant
22. **VA Learning University (VALU)**
 - Valeria Roberts – Program Specialist
23. **Office of Resolution Management (ORM)**
 - Earnestine Richardson – Harassment Prevention Specialist

Office of Resolution Management Harassment Prevention Program

Mission

The Harassment Prevention Program provides centralized tracking, monitoring and reporting processes to respond to all allegations of harassment. We will ensure all harassment allegations are reported to VA leadership outlining prompt corrective measures taken to decrease harassing behavior in the workplace. The HPP is responsible for providing education and awareness training on the harassment program and the reporting process. The HPP is committed to establishing transparency and accountability at every employment level.

Our Goal

Ultimately, the goal of the HPP is to prevent harassing conduct before it can become severe or pervasive.

What Does Harassment Look Like?

- Threatening that rejection of sexual overtures will affect appointments, promotions, transfers, or evaluations.
- Creating belittling caricatures or objects depicting persons of a particular race, national origin, religion, or other protected category.
- Telling racial or ethnic jokes.
- Teasing, mimicking, or repeatedly commenting on an individual's disability, accent, or other protected category.
- Making offensive comments, jokes or suggestions about an employee's gender.
- Making obscene or lewd comments, slurs, jokes, epithets, suggestions, or gestures.
- Commenting on an employee's body or sexual characteristics.
- Displaying nude or sexually suggestive objects, pictures, images, or cartoons.
- Continuing prohibited behavior after a coworker has objected.
- Laughing at, ignoring, or retaliating against an employee who complains.
- Bullying, intimidation, ridicule, and mockery

Note: The conduct must be unwelcome. Therefore, the perspective of the recipient – i.e., the person subjected to the behavior – as to whether the behavior is viewed as offensive, demeaning, or hostile is a primary consideration in determining whether the behavior constitutes harassing conduct.

HPP – 1-888-56-NEW VA (1-888-566-3982)